1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

lected. Before her marriage, Paulette Donnelly is reported to have told her father: "I want to be like boy. I want to rustle, make little money." She didn't want children, feeling they were too much trouble, and inquired for contraceptive information. The spontaneous exclamation of Paulette, "I'm just as good as man!" when she one day killed a porcupine with an ax, is further evidence of the same trend. Another of Old Man's daughters was on her deathbed when she said to her father: "Don't try to save me. I'm no good to you. I can't break trail, I can't hunt, I'm only a girl."[33] In conversation women often speak rather boastfully of their exploits when hunting big game. Several women were reported to have attempted to induce sterility by magical means.[34]

To sum up the pertinent data reflecting the status of women, it can be said that the society enables the feminine sex to develop a considerable degree of independence and that such freedom is welcomed. The behavior of masculine striving is additional evidence of the woman's search for sexual equality. On the other hand, men's attitudes toward women and the marital relationship give women little opportunity to express independence, and force them to take a subsidiary role which is somewhat inferior to that patterned for men.

Old Age[35]

The Kaska define old age primarily by its biological correlates. Physically, as Old Man pointed out, "When people get old they get stiff and cramp everywhere. When they turn around, everything sore." General weakness and debility affect the body. Eyesight and hearing become impaired. As a man ages his hunting ability is one of the first things to decline. Stamina is drained off, "just like electricity." Louis Mam observed that when he was young he would go anywhere for moose. He kept on the move all the time, traveling all hours of the night. But now, at the age of thirty-seven, he is beginning to feel incapable of such exertion. The day after having indulged in too strenuous activity he wakes feeling unrefreshed and unrested. "You open your eye, feel you get up. No. Go back to sleep again.. Old do that." Old age is also stated to be a time when very early experiences of an individual often vividly return to memory—"just like reading book."

Ideally old age is regarded as a period of wisdom derived from abundant experience. Old people are sometimes thought to possess strong supernatural power which has enabled them to hold on to life. Such idealization of age, however, is no obstacle to characterizing a clumsy or inept performance by assessing the actor as "like old man." In carrying old clothes, blankets, and other objects from the cabin which was to be occupied by the ethnographer, several girls began to chant: "Metła blanket," "Metła coat," and so on, for each hoary article which they brought out. The reference was to a partially senile old woman of

[33] Masculine striving was rewarded in aboriginal Kaska society at the expense of a woman's sexual satisfaction. A young girl, protected against conception by magical means, was brought up in the clothing and role of a boy, being trained to do a man's work. Her hunting ability was regarded as tied up with virginity, and she was expected to defend herself strongly against seduction. Slightly different patterns for assertive women to adopt men's roles (without, however, denying themselves sexual satisfaction) have been reported from Plains and other American Indian tribes. For a review of the literature see Seward, *Sex and the Social Order* (1946), 119–121.

[34] For details of such techniques see below, pp. 231–232.

[35] The collection of data for this section was considerably influenced by reference in the field to Simmons' *A Prospectus for Field-Research in the Position and Treatment of the Aged in Primitive and Other Societies* (1945).

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

that name who lay ill in the settlement and to whom they were humorously comparing the discarded belongings. The myths and folktales show no evidence that the aged were ever glorified. On the contrary, they idealized the stamina and ingenuity of youth while reflecting pity and sympathy for the old and helpless.[10] Sixteen year old Carl Leonard said: "I don't want to be old man. I want to be young man as long as I live. Old man, they say, hard time. Nobody carry around your things. That's why old no good. Young man always do something. I don't mind to be old, but not too old. Too old no good. Someplace you want to go, you can't go."

Anxiety is the principal emotional component with which the individual adjusts to growing old. While the aging person is resigned to the inevitability of his increasing debility, he nevertheless reacts to it as a threat for which he realizes there are no social bulwarks. There is no compensation for old age in Kaska society which takes the place of initiative in hunting and trapping. When the individual feels his capacity to endure the effort of these activities being reduced, he realizes, especially if he is a man, that from now on his self-sufficiency and independence will be seriously limited. Since the man is the principal economic provider of the Kaska family, old age is far more anxiety provoking to the male than to the female. The solidarity of women, their warmer interpersonal ties, and a woman's training for a relatively dependent status all assist in providing her with greater emotional security in age than is afforded the man. The latter, trained for the role of independent provider and taught to rely on his powers of endurance, finds it difficult to relax. His insecurity is starker and less relieved.

The manifest adjustments to old age are found first in the reduction of a person's activities. A man will curtail his trapping activities, giving the more remote portions of his territory to sons-in-law or younger brothers. He may continue to hunt with a group or go out alone for a day, but extended hunting trips are abandoned and more of the old man's time comes to be spent idling around the camp or house. Increasing criticism of youth also appears to mark the male's transition to a new segment of the life cycle. A woman too restricts her activities with age, although she has long been used to receiving assistance in household activities from daughters. For a long time she may continue to sew, apportion food, and maintain a firm control of household activities. Between husband and wife signs appear of emotional ties becoming more tightly knit. Each spouse expresses concern with the other's health. The woman worries if her husband leaves the camp and remains away too long. In both sexes there is more illness. Older men indulge in reiterated descriptions of physical symptoms. Such illness further interferes with the performance of customary duties, while the symptoms are sometimes used as rationalizations for curtailed activity. With the onset of menopause, some women also complain of headache, abdominal pains, and general despondency.

As long as an old person avoids senility and retains an interest in his household, family, and friends, he is not treated differently from other adults. With senility, however, helplessness and dependence become more extreme; the individual is left more alone, is not consulted regarding decisions, and may even be neglected.

In Old Man's camp lived a partly senile old woman. Old Metša, who was being cared for

[10] See Teit, Kaska Tales (1917).